

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07
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INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 0403

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, BM

SUBJ: NARCOTICS CONTROL -- GUB TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT NEEDS

REF: (A) RANGOON 0345 (NOTAL), (B) STATE 15290,
(C) RANGOON 0200 (NOTAL)

1. DURING BRIEFING IN OPERATION MACE DESCRIBED IN REF A, DEFENSE SERVICES INTELLIGENCE DIRECTOR COL. MYO AUNG BLAMED THE FAILURE OF THE OPERATION TO ACHIEVE SUPRISE AGAINST THE SUA INSURGENT/TRAFFICKERS ON THE BURMA AIR FORCE'S LACK OF SUFFICIENT TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT. HE SAID THAT THE ONLY AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE TO CARRY TROOPS AND SUPPLIES TO THE FORWARD OPERATION BASE FROM WHENCE THE HELICOPTERS WERE LAUNCHED AGAINST THE TARGET WAS THE US-PROVIDED F-27. IT THUS TOOK TWO FULL DAYS TO ASSEMBLE THE TROOPS AND SUPPLIES, AND THIS GAVE SUA FORCES SUFFICIENT WARNING TO ESCAPE FROM THE TARGET REFINERIES AND EVACUATE THEIR NARCOTICS.

2. COL. MYO AUNG ALSO SAID THAT THE FORTHCOMING BURMA ARMY OPERATION TO DESTROY POPPY FIELDS IN INSURGENT-INFESTED AREAS WOULD BE LESS EFFECTIVE THAN IT COULD BE
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BECAUSE OF THE AIR FORCE'S LACK OF SUFFICIENT TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT TO SUPPORT IT.

3. (AS REPORTED IN REF C, BECAUSE OF THE GROUNDING OF THE BAF'S C-47'S THERE ARE NOW ONLY THREE OPERATIONAL TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT IN THE BAF FLEET, NONE OF WHICH HAS STOL CAPABILITY, A HIGHLY DESIRABLE FEATURE FOR OPERATIONS

IN THE OPIUM PRODUCING AND TRAFFICKING AREAS.)

4. COL. MYO AUNG REFERRED TO EARLIER, INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS WITH THE NARCOTICS COORDINATOR AND OTHER MISSION OFFICIALS ABOUT THE GUB'S NEED FOR TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT AND HIS HOPE THAT WE MIGHT PROVIDE THEM. HE SAID THAT NOW WE SHOULD CONSIDER THIS TO BE A DEFINITE, OFFICIAL GUB REQUEST. HE AND BAF OFFICERS HAVE REVIEWED THE LITERATURE ON THE TYPES OF AIRCRAFT POTENTIALLY AVAILABLE AND HAVE CONCLUDED THAT EITHER THE DASH-7 (DHC-7) OR THE BUFFALO (DHC-5A) WOULD BE VERY GOOD FOR FILLING BURMA'S REQUIREMENT. IF POSSIBLE, HE SAID, THE BURMESE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE SIX OF THESE AIRCRAFT.

5. NARCOTICS COORDINATOR RESPONDED THAT WE UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM WITH REGARD TO TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT, AND THAT HE WOULD REPORT COL. MYO AUNG'S REQUEST TO WASHINGTON. HE ALSO POINTED TO THE SCHEDULED MARCH VISIT OF AID AVIATION ADVISER RUDY HALL AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION ALONG THESE LINES. COL. MYO AUNG SAID HE WOULD WELCOME SUCH DISCUSSIONS DURING HALL'S VISIT.

6. IN A SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION WITH THE AIR ATTACHE, COL. MYO AUNG AGAIN ASKED IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO GET FIVE OR SIX DASH-7'S OR BUFFALOS, SAYING THEY ARE NEEDED "VERY BADLY" FOR THE ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT.

7. COMMENT: WE AGREE THAT THE LACK OF SUFFICIENT
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TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT IS A GENUINE CONSTRAINT ON THE GUB'S ABILITY TO PROSECUTE ITS NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION CAMPAIGN. WE HOPE THAT BY THE TIME OF THE HALL VISIT WE WILL BE IN A POSITION TO BRIEF THE BURMESE ON WHAT HELP THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO OBTAIN FROM CANADA ON TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT FOR NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION.

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